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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1588
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 001278

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NSC FOR DENNIS WILDER
DEPT FOR EAP/CM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/11/2032
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [CH](#) [HK](#) [MC](#)
SUBJECT: LABOR DAY WITH THE PLA - MACAU STYLE

REF: A. HONG KONG 001198

[1](#)B. HONG KONG 001203

Classified By: E/P Chief Laurent Charbonnet; Reasons 1.4(b, d)

[1](#)1. (U) Similar to the display on May 1 in Hong Kong (see reftel a), the People's Liberation Army (PLA) held an "open day" in Macau at its compound on Taipa Island. The "Macau Post Daily" reported that 2,500 residents visited the barracks on Labor Day and watched a flag raising ceremony and military/martial arts performances by the garrison personnel.

The paper also reported that "visitors could 'test' military hardware, such as weapons and vehicles." Shotguns, machine guns, and anti-tank rockets were also on display, noted the "Macau Daily News." The Museum of Military History and various working and training facilities were open to visitors, as well. The "Macau Post Daily" editorialized that local residents saw the presence of the PLA in Macau as a stabilizing force for society. (Note: The "Macau Post Daily" is the only English-language newspaper in Macau and it is published in hardcopy only. End note.)

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: Echoing our comments in reftel b, the Macau government is already straining to keep pace with various social tensions arising from rapid development, a gambling-based economy often alleged to be rife with organized crime, and massive inflows of tourists and visitors trying to capitalize on the quaint but sometimes quavering society there. In contrast to Hong Kong where the PLA is sometimes viewed with suspicion, many Macanese believe that the PLA's presence has helped prevent a return to the gangland violence of the 1990s and is a stabilizing factor in the MSAR. End comment.
Cunningham